XXI Trinity 2011
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
Ephesians 6.10-20   St. John 4.46-54
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No one will ever believe...Jesus tells us...unless they see miracles and wonders!

Jesus has just arrived back in Cana after having spent some time teaching and healing in Samaria. A government official from Capernaum who was in town, came to Jesus and asked him to come back to Capernaum with him and heal is sick son, who was near death.

We might have expected Jesus to have immediately gone with the man to Capernaum and laid hands on his son and healed him. Instead, Jesus said something to him that seems callous and uncaring. He told him no one will ever believe unless they see miracles and wonders.

Our desperate father isn't deterred by Jesus' apparent indifference. "My son is about to die and I need your help," he said to Jesus. "Come and heal my son now, there is no time to waste!" Jesus told the man to go home. He said to the man, "Don't worry. Your son will be OK!"

On his way home, his servants ran out to meet the boy's father, and told him not only is his son alive, he is getting better. When he asks what time his son started to get better, he realizes it was the same time he was talking to Jesus. He and his entire household believed in Jesus.

When Jesus said no one would ever believe unless they saw miracles and wonders, he wasn't talking about the desperate dad. He already knew what was in the man's heart and fully intended to restore his son's health. The man's refusal to give up shows us his faith in Jesus was strong...he had no doubt Jesus could heal his son.

Jesus' criticism is directed at people who demand God prove him self through miracles and wonders or they won't believe. Even when they do witness God's miracles and wonders, they still don't believe. The greatest miracle and wonder of all time, Jesus' Resurrection, has failed to convince people of God's power to restore life. They still don't believe.

The miracles and wonders of Jesus are not magic tricks. They are testimonies to the awesome power of God to restore and make whole again, people who find them selves in desperate and hopeless situations.

The miracle in today's Gospel was the second miracle Jesus performed. The first was when he changed water into wine at the wedding feast. Both miracles took place in Cana of Galilee…in Gentile territory. Further proof the miracles and wonders of Jesus were not exclusively for one group of people.

Jesus wants people to be complete. Much of his time on earth was spent healing people of various sicknesses. He shows great compassion for people who were in hopeless situations. Why then does he appear to be insensitive toward the cries of a desperate father for his sick son who is about to die?

What Jesus wants from us is for us to show the same kind of faith and determination the man in today's Gospel showed. He doesn't want us to give up if we don't get an immediate answer to our prayers. There is no such thing as a prayer that goes unanswered. We can expect one of three answers: yes, no, or wait a while longer. And we need to trust God knows what's best for us when we don't get the answer we expected.

In the Epistle, Saint Paul tells us to pray on every occasion and to be persistent in our prayers. He tells us to always pray for all of God's people. He wants us to have a set time to pray and be consistent. We do that corporately during the Intercessions and the Prayer for the Church, when we pray God will help all those who are in experiencing any kind of trouble or sorrow, who are in need, or who are sick in any way, or who are experiencing any kind of adverse condition in their lives.

Prayer strengthens our Faith and helps keep us focused on the work God wants us to do. Through prayer, we learn to trust Jesus more and more each day as the Healer of mind, body and soul; the one who hears what we ask, and the one who is ready to take action, so our lives can be made whole again.

God's miracles and wonders are all around us. We just have to take the time to look for them...and believe!
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